

Email, Lori Taylor, professor, University of Texas, Oct. 6, 2016

From:Fauzeyya Rahman

Date: Thursday, Oct. 6, 2016 at 12:49 p.m.

Subject: information request: PolitiFact

Hi Dr. Taylor,

I'm a reporter at the Express-News working on an assignment for PolitiFact Texas. A think tank recently calculated what the impact would be per state if the Dept. of Education were eliminated, and found in Texas, that would equal 49,000 teacher jobs eliminated.

I'm trying to make sure I have the correct information on how teacher salaries are calculated in Texas, and I see you're an expert on school finance. Would it be possible to walk me through how much funding for teacher salaries is calculated, and how much comes from the federal govt, as I understand it's primarily state/local funds?

I'm on deadline today, and would greatly appreciate if you could get back to me as soon as possible. Please feel free to give me a call or send me an email, whichever is easier. Thanks very much for your time.

(Taylor, 12:59 p.m.)

Teacher salaries are seldom funded by the federal government. Could you send me the link to the think tank report so that I could see what they are doing? I suspect that they are taking the federal money, dividing by the average teacher salary and reporting that the loss of DoEd money would be equivalent to 49,000 teacher jobs.

(Rahman, 1:03 p.m.)

Hi Dr. Taylor,

Thanks so much for your reply. Yes from my understanding that's how they are calculating it, I just wanted to make sure I was accounting for any federal funding could go to teacher salaries. I believe Title One or funds for students with disabilities could fund salaries?

Here's the link to the analysis:

<https://www.americanprogressaction.org/issues/education/news/2016/09/01/162258/trumps-plan-to-eliminate-the-department-of-education-is-yet-another-in-a-list-of-terrible-ideas/>

And this is the blog post that mentioned Texas:

<http://progresstexas.org/blog/donald-trumps-education-plan-would-fire-49000-texas-teachers>

(Taylor, Oct. 7, 2016, 12:51 p.m.)

Hope this is not too late.

I identified all TEA accounts (i.e. funds) that were at least 95% federally sourced during 2014-15, excluding fund 240 (the national school lunch program which is not administered by the department of education). Total spending from those funds in 2014-15 was \$3.24 billion. Of that \$3.24 billion, \$2.28 billion (70%) was in payroll (salary and benefits, objects 6100-6199). Therefore, my calculations indicate that approximately 70% of Federal revenues from the Department of Education are spent on payroll.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Lori

(Rahman, Oct. 14, 2016, 1:53 p.m.)

Hi Dr. Taylor,

Thanks again for your help last week. I forgot to ask you this before, but could you offer your assessment of the think tank's claim, that 49,000 teacher jobs could be eliminated under Donald Trump's education plan?

Thank you,
Fauzeyya

(Taylor, 2.53 p.m.)

Hi Fauzeyya-

I think the Center for American Progress Action Fund has tried to make potential cuts in education expenditures more real and easier to compare across states by transforming federal dollars into an equivalent number of teaching positions. From their methodology, it is clear that they are calculating the number of teachers who could potentially lose their jobs if the budget of the Department of Education were cut to zero, not the number of teachers who would probably lose their jobs. To get to the 49,000 teacher estimate, you have to assume that 100% of federal revenues are spent on teacher payrolls and every penny of it would be eliminated under Mr. Trump. In Texas, I estimate that only about 70% of federal revenues are spend on payroll. Furthermore, I don't believe that Mr. Trump could ever succeed in zeroing out federal funding for popular Department of Education programs that aid schools and districts serving low income and special education students even if he did succeed in eliminating the cabinet-level department. So, I believe the estimates are overblown.

